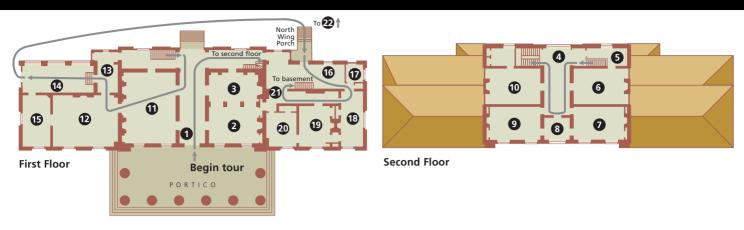
A Tour of Arlington House



Follow the numbers to tour the house and slave quarters. Park rangers and volunteers are stationed throughout the house to answer questions. About one third of the furnishings belonged to the Custis and Lee families; the rest are period antiques. Copies of the original family portraits are displayed on the first floor.

You enter Arlington House from the large portico as guests did before the Civil War.

In 1824 the Marquis de Lafayette described the scene from the **Center Hall** across the Potomac as the "finest view in the world." This hall was the scene of happy homecomings for Lee. On the walls at the west end are hunting scenes painted by George Washington Parke Custis about 1818.

2 On June 30, 1831, Lt. Robert E. Lee and Mary Custis were married in the Family Parlor. Mrs. Custis, and later Mrs. Lee, conducted family prayers twice each day in this room. The engagement portrait of Mary Anna Randolph Custis hangs over the fireplace. The door on the left leads to the oldest section of the house.

3 According to family tradition, Lee proposed to Mary Custis in the Family Dining Room. Lee often gathered roses, placing one at the plate of each woman present for breakfast. Original pieces include china, silver, and the twin serving tables.

At the end of the hall, turn right and go up the rear staircase to the second floor. Before 1861 these steps would have been used primarily by slaves. *Caution*—steep staircase.

4 The Lee family's chambers were accessed from the **Upper Hall**.

5 The Girls' Dressing Room connects to the girls' bedchamber. It also served as a playroom. Here, Annie Lee conducted Sunday school for the slave children.

6 Annie, Agnes, and Mildred shared the Girls' Chamber. Agnes noted in her journal, "Arlington with its commanding view, fine old trees, and luxuriant woods can favorably compare with any home I've seen!"

According to an acquaintance, Mary, the eldest of the Lee girls, was "as unrestrained in speech as she was unconventional in her conduct." She often shared this room, Mary's Chamber, with her cousin Martha Williams.

8 In the 1850s Mrs. Lee had two dressing rooms converted into this one Small Chamber with a new doorway cut into the upper hall. Guests often stayed in this room.

9 The **Boys' Chamber** belonged to Robert Jr., Custis, and William Henry Fitzhugh (Rooney). Robert Jr., observed, "My mother I could sometimes circumvent; I always knew it was impossible to disobey my father." Custis, originally a U.S. Army officer, joined the Confederate States Army with his brothers.

On April 19, 1861, in Colonel and Mrs. Lee's Chamber, Lee faced the grim choice of honoring six generations of family ties in Virginia or supporting the Union his family had helped create. Only the day before he had been offered command of the army being raised to invade the South. From his long night of solitude Lee emerged with a letter of resignation, thus ending a 32-year career of service to his country. "I did only what my duty demanded," he said later. The door leads into the dressing room, where Mrs. Lee gave birth to six of their seven children.

Walk down the adjoining main staircase and turn right.

A storeroom for nearly 40 years, the White Parlor was finished and decorated by the Lees in 1855. They purchased the Victorian parlor furniture, and Lee chose the handcarved marble mantels. Agnes Lee remembered, "In our childish days, we rode round and round on stick horses making stables of the niches in the Arches."

12 The Morning Room was first used as a parlor. Mrs. Lee converted it in 1855 after arthritis restricted her mobility. Her father used it as his painting studio. He painted American Revolutionary War scenes, including the Battle of Monmouth, New Jersey.

This hallway was originally the **Store Room**, where female slaves made and stored rosewater in tall glasses.

Walk down the small staircase on your left.

The Conservatory was originally an open porch. Mrs. Lee grew plants here during the cold seasons. Gardening was a favorite pastime of the Custis and Lee women.

Just off the conservatory is the **Office and Studio**. Here Custis, and later, Robert and Mary Lee, managed the 1,100–acre estate.

To see the north wing, turn right as you leave the house. Walk along the rear of the house to the north wing porch.

16 In the **Outer Hall Pantry** slaves completed preparations before they served food in the dining room.

Lee probably installed this **Bath and Water Closet** in the 1850s. A large overhead cistern supplied the indoor plumbing.

Turn right and step up into the oldest section of the north wing.

The Lee children and the slaves began their education in the School and Sewing Room. Mrs. Custis, and later Mrs. Lee, held lessons for the slaves in preparation for their eventual freedom. Mrs. Custis persuaded her husband to include a provision for the emancipation of his slaves in his will, just as George Washington had done. Workers discovered the globe in the attic in the 1920s; it has never left the house. Caution—low doorway.

This room served as Mr. and Mrs. Custis' Chamber. Both Custises died here. Agnes and Annie Lee were reciting the Lord's Prayer with their grandmother when she died on April 23, 1853. The mantle is the oldest in the house.

Many visitors and the Lee children's governess used this **Guest Chamber**. Here, Lee dressed for his wedding on June 30, 1831.

21 Step down from the Inner Hall. Turn right to go downstairs to the basement. Caution—low doorway.

Note: The basement rooms are not shown on floor plan.

Slaves washed clothes and prepared meals in the **Winter Kitchen**. Cook George Clark was renowned for his biscuits and asparagus. Another kitchen was in the north slave quarters.

The **Wine Cellar** held wine and brandy made from fruit grown in the garden. Mrs. Lee took the wine when she left Arlington in 1861.

22 Two slave quarters, exhibits, a bookstore, and restrooms are behind the house.